

TESTIMONY OF SOMPORN LORGERANON
ON ORGAN TRAFFICKING BY THE CHINESE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT
before the
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
of the
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Five years ago, I went to China for a kidney transplant. In 1993, I experienced kidney failure, and receiving dialysis in Thailand is very expensive, and the wait for a kidney is very long. I heard from friends at the hospital that do dialysis and other friends that had traveled to China that I could get a kidney transplant there if I had the money.

The procedure for obtaining the kidney was very direct. I dealt with the hospital, Zhongshan Hospital in Guangzhou, directly, and never went through a Thai or Chinese broker. I obtained first a six-month tourism visa to travel to China. I knew to do this from friends and relatives who had the procedure or had heard about the procedure. On the first day, I went next to the hospital, but it was not until the second day that I went into the hospital. I told them that I was interested in having a transplant, and they admitted me right away. I paid the hospital **HK\$80,000** before receiving the transplant, and I was told to do this by the hospital. They did dialysis on me three times a week for the first two weeks, and then I was notified that I would receive a kidney in ten days. My operation took place on June 22, 1993. I paid another **HK\$20,000** after the operation, including **HK\$6,000** or **HK\$7,000** to each of the nurses and doctors taking care of me, so that they would provide me with better care. I did not know whether or not it happened on the same day as an execution, but the doctor, who is head of the urology department at that hospital, told me after I had recovered that the kidney I had received came from an executed prisoner. Also, we were shown a newspaper clipping about an execution that took place the same day. My mother went to the temple to pray for these people after I found this out. I can't read Chinese, but the doctor told me that they were sentenced to death for drug trafficking. I didn't have much of a reaction to this at the time, and I left China about thirteen days after my operation. Other foreign patients (from Thailand, Macao, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) were at the hospital at the same time as me, and there were about five who had an operation on the same day, in the same hospital.

The question of whether the practice of executing prisoners for their body parts is right or wrong is a very very tough one. I don't necessarily agree with the selling of body parts, but as a patient, I go through the suffering. I know what it feels like to have kidney failure, and suffer through kidney disease and the pain that comes with it. My elder sister felt the same pain-she waited in Thailand for ten years for a kidney before passing away. As for the question of whether, faced with a second kidney failure, I would do it again, I would wait in Thailand, but I might have to wait for many years. I think that it is better to wait in Thailand for as long as you can afford before going to China.

My view is this: If someone is killed just because the **government** wants to sell the person's body parts, that is wrong. But, it is a difficult question, because if the person really did something wrong, then their body part is used to help others.

A person in my office had kidney failure a while ago. They came to me, because they knew that I had gone to China to get a new kidney, and they told me a story of how their relatives had to sell everything (even their house!) to pay for the expensive dialysis. It is hard to tell someone that they should not go in this situation.

When I had kidney failure, I had no job, and I had to live on whatever my family could support. After I had a transplant, I got a second chance-I married my beautiful wife, got a job and a promotion, and I have a wonderful family. But at the same time, I am not comfortable with someone being killed in order to sell their parts to people like me.